

Remarks

This paper is in response to the Office Action mailed December 21, 2006. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 7. Claim 7 is being rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 18 is being added. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully asserts that the present application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowability indicating the allowance of claims 1-18.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by Coen (U.S. Pat. No. 5,586,644). Coen corresponds to European Patent Application No. 0 711 714 which is thoroughly discussed in Applicant's original disclosure. See page 1, line 9 - page 2, line 16 of the present application. As discussed below, Coen does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1 of the present application.

Coen teaches providing removable inserts forming sliding surfaces on chain modules. Various methods of attaching the inserts to different module configurations are disclosed. The different modules disclosed in Coen, however, are described with reference to the removable inserts and not other individual features of any specific module.

Fig. 1 of Coen discloses a module including a sheet-shaped body part, or bld, provided with a conveying face located at an upper side of the body part. Hinge holes 15 are included in the body part and two projections are provided at the underside of the body part at the body part ends. Sliding faces are located at the sides of the projections facing each other. The embodiment disclosed in Fig. 1 of Coen, however, does not disclose sliding faces located at sides of the projections facing away from each other nor projections spaced inwardly from the body part ends.

In order to satisfy these deficiencies, the Office Action refers to a completely different chain module shown in Fig. 5 of Coen. The module shown in Fig. 5 includes a top plate from which downwardly projections extend. Hinge holes are formed in the projections and not in the top plate of the module shown in Fig. 5 of Coen. As a result, the module disclosed in Fig. 5 of Coen is very different from the module disclosed in Fig. 1 of Coen.

Moreover, nothing in Coen suggests that features unrelated to the inserts are interchangeable between the different modules. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that Coen does not disclose or suggest the module of Fig. 1 including sliding faces located at the sides of the projections facing each other, as required in Fig. 1 of the present application. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 of the present application is allowable over Coen.

Claims 2-4, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 16 depend from claim 1, which as discussed above Applicant believes is allowable over Coen. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 5, 6, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Coen in view of Van Zijderveld (U.S. Pat. No. 6,851,758). Claims 5, 6, and 15 ultimately depend from claim 1, which Applicant believes is allowable over Coen. Van Zijderveld '758 does not satisfy the deficiencies in Coen. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 5, 6, and 15 are allowable over Coen in view of Van Zijderveld '758. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5, 6, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 8 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Coen in view of Van Zijderveld (U.S. Pat. No. 6,601,696). Claims 5, 6, and 15 ultimately depend from claim 1, which Applicant believes is allowable over Coen. Van Zijderveld '696 does not satisfy the deficiencies in Coen. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 5, 6, and 15 are allowable over Coen in view of Van Zijderveld '696. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claim 7 is indicated to contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, claim 7 is being rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claim 7.

New claim 18 is being added to more clearly claim an embodiment of the present invention. In particular, claim 18 claims a chain module including the element of a bled having an upper side extending between outer bled sides and including hinge holes, as described on page 6, line 18- page 7, line 3 of Applicant's disclosure. Claim 18 also recites a first projection provided at an underside of said bled and spaced inwardly from one of said

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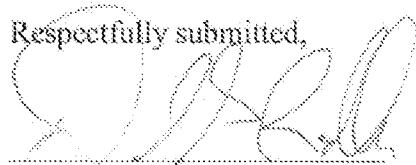
outer bled sides, said first projection having a first side and a second side; and a second projection provided at said underside of said bled, said second projection being spaced from said first projection and spaced inwardly from the other of said outer bled sides, said second projection having a first side and a second side, wherein said first side of said first projection faces said first side of said second projection and said second side of said first projection faces away from said second side of said second projection, as described on page 7, line 17 - page 8, line 8 of Applicant's disclosure. Finally, claim 18 also includes the limitation of a sliding face formed on each of said first and second sides, between the projections at the underside of the bled, and between each of said projections and each outer bled side, said sliding faces on said first sides and said underside of said bled between the projections forming a longitudinal guide with a substantially U-shaped cross section and said sliding faces located on said second sides and between each of said projections and each outer bled side forming longitudinal guides with a substantially L-shaped cross section, as described on page 7, line 17 - page 9, line 2 of Applicant's disclosure.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the subject matter of new claim 18 is disclosed in Applicant's original disclosure, and is thus not new matter. Moreover, Applicant respectfully asserts that none of the cited references disclose or suggest a bled having hinge holes in combination with the sliding surfaces recited in claim 18. Accordingly, allowance of claim 18 is respectfully requested.

Claim 7 is being amended and claim 18 is being added. Claims 2-6 and 8-17 depend from claim 1, which as discussed above, is believed allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully asserts that the present application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowability indicating the allowance of claims 1-18.

No fees for filing this paper are believed to be due. However, if such fees are due, including fees for an extension of time to respond, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to deposit account no. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,



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